

March 11, 2020

Public Notice for Water Quality Certification and/or Waste
Discharge Requirements (Dredge/Fill Projects)
State Route 1 PM 31.35 Elk Creek Bridge Pier 3 Repair Project
(EA: 01-0J750)
WDID No. 1B190136WNME, ECM PIN CW-861182
Mendocino County

On July 31, 2019, the North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board (Regional Water Board) received a Notice of Intent (NOI) from the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) to comply with the terms of, and obtain coverage under, the General 401 Water Quality Certification Order No. SB14008IN for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) Regional General Permit No. 5 for Repair and Protection Activities in Emergency Situations. This was intended to address storm damage in two locations (State Route 1, southbound lane at post mile (PM) 31.27 and PM 31.35) near the Elk Creek Bridge. However, the work for the bridge scour (PM 31.35) did not fall within the Army Corps timelines for the RGP5 permit. The Regional Water Board received a separate NOI for the completed Elk Creek Emergency Repair Work at PM 31.27 on September 27, 2019, and a Notice of Applicability (NOA) was issued for this project located at PM 31.27 to Caltrans on January 15, 2020.

On August 26, 2019 the Corps issued a 404 Certification (Nationwide Permit No. 13) for Certification for activities associated with the State Route 1 Elk Creek Bridge Scour PM 31.35 Project (Project). The Project is adjacent to an area of 70 linear feet of Elk Creek previously authorized by the Corps for emergency concrete slope protection in a letter to Caltrans dated November 30, 2016. (SPN 2016-00325N)

Project Location

The Project is located at the Elk Creek Bridge approximately 2-miles south of Philo-Greenwood Road on State Route (SR) 1 at PM 31.35 and within the Elk Creek Hydrologic Subarea 113.62. The Project has impacted Elk Creek, waters of the US and the state, located within Mendocino County, California. Coordinates of the Project are approximately latitude 39.1021° N and longitude 123.7015 ° W.

Project Description

The primary purpose of the Project is to prevent further erosion at Pier 3 at the Elk Creek Bridge (BR#10-0120). Following a period of heavy rains beginning on January 5th, 2019, high storm water flows caused significant scour exposing the piles and eroding the embankment under the northern abutment, resulting in the formation of a large scour hole behind Pier 3 (north pier) of the Elk Creek Bridge at SR 1 at Postmile 31.35 in Mendocino County.

Caltrans was concerned that failure to prevent additional scour at Pier 3 may lead to damage of the bridge structural integrity and determined that immediate emergency repairs were necessary to maintain the travel way and keep the highway open to the public. On June 12, 2019 Caltrans sent a notification of the Project to the Regional Water Board and other agencies. Construction was delayed until June 20, 2019 due to site specific conditions. Construction activities included:

- Creation of a temporary access road on the northwest side of the bridge abutment, including removal of existing riparian vegetation (primarily willow).
- Removal of original ground and sediment deposits on the western side of the scour hole to provide a uniform layer of rock.
- Installation of rock slope protection (RSP) backfill behind Pier 3, and between Pier 3 and the northern abutment to replace the previously existing rock and soil that was removed by scouring. An area approximately 14 linear feet by 9.5 feet (133 sqft) of streambed was filled with large rock that was placed over geotextile filter fabric into the scour hole behind Pier 3 of the Elk Creek Bridge. A total of 41.2 cubic yards (CY) of rock slope protection (RSP) were placed within a 0.011-acre, including 5.93 CY behind Pier 3 and 35.27 CY of RSP downstream and immediately west of Pier 3.
- Removal of the gravel access road, installation of appropriate erosion control measures, and revegetation of the Project site.

A biological monitor was onsite during vegetation clearing to prevent impacts to nesting birds and other sensitive species. A biological monitor remained onsite during the work.

Project Timeline

Project construction was initiated on June 20, 2019 and was completed within 37 days on August 27, 2019.

Receiving Waters

The proposed Project caused disturbances to waters of the state at Elk Creek within the Elk Creek Hydrologic Subarea 113.62. Coordinates of the Project are approximately latitude 39.1019° N and longitude 123.7016 ° W. Elk Creek is a perennial, fish-bearing stream that connects to the Pacific Ocean within a short distance (0.25-mile) of the bridge and bank scour location. The scour bank location is tidally influenced.

Project Impacts

Temporary impacts to waters of the state included approximately 14 linear feet (133 sqft) of jurisdictional streambed that was permanently filled with large rock.

Mitigation

The Project application included Caltrans standard construction site temporary BMPs and erosion control methods. There were no permanent impacts and no revegetation maintenance plan or success criteria were required.

Other Agency Permits and Actions

Caltrans received a Nationwide Permit No. 13 for Bank Stabilization pursuant to section 404 of the Clean Water Act from the United States Army Corps of Engineers dated August 26, 2019. Additionally, Caltrans applied for a Streambed Alteration Agreement (1600) from the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW).

CEQA

Caltrans, as lead agency for the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), assumed that the Project was exempt from CEQA review Title 14, section 15269 and met the eligibility requirements for coverage under the General 401 Water Quality Certification Order No. SB14008IN for U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Regional General Permit No. 5 for Repair and Protection Activities in Emergency Situations. No CEQA documents were filed.

Public Comments

Regional Water Board staff are proposing to regulate this Project pursuant to Section 401 of the Clean Water Act (33 USC 1341) and/or Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act authority. In addition, staff will consider all phone calls and comments submitted in writing and received within a 21-day comment period that begins on the first date of issuance of this notice and ends at 5:00 p.m. on the last day of the comment period. Please contact Susan Stewart at Susan.Stewart@waterboards.ca.gov or (707) 576-2657 within 21 days of the posting of this notice if you have any questions or comments.

The information contained in this public notice is only a summary of the applicant's proposed activities. The Regional Water Board's Project file includes the application for certification and additional details of the proposed Project, including maps and design drawings. Project documents and any comments received are on file and may be reviewed or copied at the Regional Water Board office, 5550 Skylane Boulevard, Suite A, Santa Rosa, California. Appointments are recommended for document review. Appointments can be made by calling (707) 576-2220.

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